

VOTE FOR TABERNACLE PROJECT ON 7 JULY! 1987

Heber City urgently needs your support! The City's tabernacle, saved from demolition by cooperative effort some years ago, now needs your vote on 7 July to approve plans to remodel and utilize this lovely old building. The project includes a badly needed new city hall, space for a museum, and a meeting hall. With the growing emphasis on tourism as a means of improving the economy of the valley, this project will add to Heber's attractiveness and appeal.

The project is not expected to require any new tax burden. The City already has ^{\$273,576}~~\$167,000~~ in place toward the project and funds budgeted for capital improvements should cover anticipated loan payments. Plans submitted by George Olsen, architect, maintain the building's character and have been approved by the state historical society.

When one considers the history of the building and what it has meant to our community, the merits of its preservation are more readily apparent. Twenty-seven years after the first pioneers entered the valley, the need was felt for a stake tabernacle. Under the leadership of President Abram Hatch and with hard work and much sacrifice, a beautiful edifice was constructed. The red sandstone was quarried by hand from the mountains east of Heber in Lake Creek and hauled in wagons to the site. The cost of the building was more than \$30,000 and took five years to complete. The hand-hewn stone is complemented by white-painted wood trim. The rugged strength of the building tells of the determined self-reliance and quiet confidence of the pioneers who built our community. The old tabernacle is a heritage left by a vigorous, resourceful people. These pioneers were our grandparents and great-grand^{grand}parents. It constitutes a very real and tangible tie to the past--a bridge between generations. It is the historic heart of our city.

The tabernacle was dedicated on May 5th, 1889. The ceremony attracted the largest number of people ever congregated in Heber up to that time. Thirteen hundred persons were present to hear Elder Francis M. Lyman of the Council of the Twelve give the dedicatory prayer. For many years the tabernacle served the people and grew old. In July 1964, it was announced that the building would be razed to make way for a larger, modern stake center. Along with it

would go the social hall (senior citizens center) built in 1906-07. Protests arose from the citizens of the community. Further protests poured into the newspaper from various organizations throughout the state such as the Sons and Daughters of the Utah pioneers, the state parks director, architects, the director of the state historical society and many more. In response to the protests, the County Commissioners, the Heber City Council, ^{and} the mayors of Heber, Midway, and Charleston issued a resolution in support of preserving and restoring our historical and beloved tabernacle.

Not until the blades of the bulldozer were literally pushing at the walls did a few dedicated persons of Heber City organize. Appeals were then directed to the First Presidency of the Church who finally agreed to postpone demolition. A grace period was granted during which funds would be raised to purchase an alternate site for the construction of a new LDS center. Sixteen hundred Wasatch County citizens signed a petition pleading for the preservation of the tabernacle. This goal was finally achieved through the following financial arrangements:

--the LDS church received a payment \$45,000 from Heber City and \$22,000 from private contributions.

--Heber City received the tabernacle, social hall and three acres of land.

Volunteer crews cleaned, painted, replaced windows and readied the tabernacle for use as a cultural and theatrical center. In 1971 and 1972, it was the home of the Pioneer Playhouse. Many delightful plays were presented. Additional improvements have been made over the years. During the 1970s when state and federal funds for restoration projects were available, the Wasatch Historical Society working with the Utah Historical Society applied for and received several grants. From 1972 to 1977 Heber City provided \$1,000 per year, the amount required for obtaining grant funds. The City has also maintained the tabernacle grounds over the years. Moreover, additional funds for improvements were forthcoming from special fund raising events, and contributions from individuals and organizations. There was also considerable volunteer labor. Some of the improvements include: new outside doors, a new furnace, insulation, replacement of electrical wiring and work on the plumbing. All these efforts must count for something.

In summary, we emphasize once again: the community needs your support! Please vote in favor of this vital project to preserve and utilize the old tabernacle!